Nebraska Information Technology Commission (NITC)
Community Technology Fund 2001

Application Form

Section I: General Information

A. Project Title: Greeley Learning & Technology Center

Name of Submitting Entity: Greeley Public Schools

Project Contact Information: Gene Haddix

Address: P. O. Box 160

City, State, Zip: Greeley, NE 68842

Telephone: (308) 428-3145

Fax Number: (308) 428-5395

E-Mail address: ghaddix@genie.esu10.k12.ne.us

B. Certification of Request

I certify that to the best of my knowledge the information in this application is correct and that the application has been authorized by this entity to meet the obligations set forth in this application.

Authorized signature: _____

Typed Name: Gene Haddix

Title: Superintendent of Greeley School Systems

Date: 2/15/01

Total State Funds Requested: $25,000

> ***Supporting documentation, including partner letters of commitment, and the signed application form will be mailed to NITC application headquarters.***

Section II: Executive Summary

The establishment of the Greeley Learning & Technology Center provides the use of information technology in education, accessible life long learning opportunities, and economic development for the rural communities of Greeley County.

The primary goal of this project is to provide accessible, up-to-date resources, training and education to residents of Greeley County. This includes accessing the Internet, using distance learning equipment and taking college classes. This will be accomplished by collaboration between city and school to make existing school facilities available to the public by providing a one-stop learning center, equipped with computers, distance learning, periodicals, books and various interactive media resources. On-site information technology and business development classes will also be available to provide continuous learning opportunities for community members.

This project is the first phase of a long range plan which will include construction of a facility to expand the Greeley Public School Library and combine the city library into the Greeley Learning & Technology Center.

The Greeley Technology Task force is the initiator of the project. Their mission is "***to assist our community to take part in and become a partner with others to utilize technology as a tool to improve living standards and economic level of our citizens.***" Their focus includes:

- Enhance overall community education system.
- Improve cooperation between communities.
- Help to prepare the community for the future.
- Improve cooperation between governmental subdivisions such as city and public education.
- Assist in developing a library/technology center which combines city and public school support.

Section III: Goals and Objectives

1. Describe the project, including the specific goals and objectives.

The establishment of the Greeley Learning & Technology Center provides the use of information technology in education, accessible life long learning opportunities, and economic development for the rural communities of Greeley County.

The primary goal of this project is to provide accessible, up-to-date resources, training and education to residents of Greeley County, from accessing the Internet, to taking college classes, and creating on-line businesses. This will be accomplished by collaboration between the city and school, to make the existing school facilities and information technology equipment available to the residents of the community. This will create a one-stop learning center, equipped with computers, distance learning, periodicals, books and various

interactive media resources, and offering on-site information technology and business development classes.

GOALS

        A. Stimulate the visibility and support of a shared community technology & learning center throughout Greeley County.
        B. Maximize the use of existing facility and equipment prior to construction of the Learning Technology Center.
        C. Realize a community closeness to the public institution and to the student body.

OBJECTIVES

- Provide access to existing school library as well as computer technology awareness for the whole community. Do so by opening the facility to the public on non-school hours such as one or more evenings a week and/or weekends.

- Promote use of Internet technologies to the surrounding communities. Contact school systems and village organizations with educational activity schedules for courses/workshops etc. that will be available via distance learning.

- Expand support from the community college to offer classes on Internet use, business development, computer software programs and application of distance learning.

- Achieve a monetary savings for our citizens by decreasing their investments in computers, software and access to restricted databases.

- Provide specialized on-line information resources for our citizens such as genealogy databases, electronic books, governmental records, etc.

2. **Describe the project's relationship to the entity's comprehensive technology plan.**

Funding of $25,000 from NITC would allow Phase 1 of the three-year, $400,000 project (refer to Table 1) to be completed. Phase 1 activities will continue throughout the completion of the Learning & Technology Center. The outcome of Phase 1 will be limited by the lack of space and number of hours open to the general public. However, it will provide access to emerging technology to all citizens. The completion of Phase 1 will provide a valuable foundation for the Technology Task Force to fulfill the goals of the comprehensive, three phase project. Merging the city and school library will be completed in Phase 2 and 3, once adequate funding has been secured. The expansion of the school facility will provide the adequate space, equipment and resource needs to make the center more accessible to the general public, students, and teachers.

This project complements the Strategic School Improvement Plan for Greeley Public Schools by providing additional access to students and teachers in the use of technology and the

Internet. This increased availability will provide teachers with additional computers to access while the school computer lab is occupied.

Table 1. Greeley Learning & Technology Center Project Plan

Phase 1 – 12 months NITC Grant Funding of $25,000	Phase 2 – 12 months	Phase 3 – 12 months
• Acquire computer equipment, software, business resources • Establish plan of operation (procedures, hours open, etc.) • Commence serving adult and student population with existing library and IT equipment • Implement plan of operation • Hire part time media technicians • Research on-line resource information (i.e. electronic library, business materials) • Promote and recruit students for IT classes • Seek input for needed IT classes • Assess community training and education needs • Coordinate training and education offerings through Central Community College • Continue fund raising and grant writing efforts	• Evaluate success/problems in using the technology in Phase 1 • Plan and carry out promotional activities to build upon IT capability • Break ground on new Greeley Learning and Technology Center • Bring expanded community concept into reality • Review funding status for facility with expansion thus far • Coordinate training and education offerings through Central Community College • Continue fund raising and grant writing efforts	• Consolidate city and school library into one-stop learning & technology center at the school • Complete building renovation and construction • Acquire additional computer equipment and software • Establish a study group to provide input for future goals and needs • Lease used computers to patrons/citizens • Expand educational offerings (i.e. CISCO training) • Offer college degree programs to cohort distance learning groups

3. **Describe the project's objectives and how they support the goals of the NITC and the priorities of the Community Council.**

The primary goal of this project is to provide accessible, up-to-date resources, training and education to residents of Greeley County, from accessing the Internet, to taking college classes, and creating on-line businesses.

The goals of this project clearly address the following NITC and Community Council goals:

NITC
NITC-1. Support the development of a unified statewide telecommunications infrastructure that is scalable, reliable and efficient so as to:
- Improve government efficiency and effectiveness.

- Broaden educational opportunities to include expanded access to lifelong educational and training opportunities so that Nebraska's citizens and workforce can prosper in the emerging information society.
- Enhance services to Nebraska communities and citizens.

NITC-2. Coordinate the state's investment in telecommunications infrastructure so as to:
- Encourage collaboration between communities of interest.

NITC-3. Determine a broad strategy and objectives for developing and sustaining information technology development in Nebraska, including long-range funding strategies so as to:
- Encourage the appropriate use of information technology in education, health care and economic development, and every level of government service.
- Encourage and enable long-term infrastructure innovation and improvement.

Community Council
CC-1. Ensuring access to public and private services for all citizens of the State of Nebraska through the appropriate and efficient use of information technology.

CC-3. Developing a workforce knowledgeable of and fluent in the use of applications of information technology.

CC-4. Facilitating IT development and innovation by raising awareness, sharing information, encourage collaboration, and developing partnerships among public and between public and private entities.

Section IV: Scope and Objectives

1. **Beneficiaries of this project and the need(s) being addressed;**

Beneficiaries of this project include the citizens of rural Greeley county including adults, students, and teachers. Rural Nebraska communities often are unable to access or have difficulty in accessing continuing education and training. Through this project information technology, on-line resources, and education/training opportunities will be easily accessible and available to all citizens of Greeley county, regardless of their economic status.

2. **Expected outcomes of the project;**

The expected outcomes of this project include:

- A cross section of the community (adults, students, and teachers) utilizing the current public school library resources, including computer lab, Internet access, and distance learning equipment.

- The adult and student population from various communities effectively using the same facility.

- An increased interest and demand for information technology access and business development opportunities.

- Development of continuing education and business training for area residents including courses which fulfill needs in business development, computers, Internet, specialized software, etc.

- The communities in the county inter-linked and successfully utilizing distance learning equipment to conduct meetings, student projects, college courses, and other specialized training classes.

- Experience a new attitude, interest, and support for the educational system.

- Experience continuous improvement in cooperation between the communities of the county.

- A greater awareness about information technology opportunities.

- Business development through use of telecommunication systems.

- Economic impact of retaining young adults in rural communities because of increased telecommunication job opportunities.

3. Measurement and assessment methods that will verify project outcomes;

Part of the development of the Greeley Learning & Technology Center project includes tracking of how the facility is used (classes, workshops presented, meetings held, equipment utilization, individuals accessing information). This will not only allow the project team to measure the success of the project, but will also provide a tool to determine what resources are most in demand.

Another portion of the assessment of the project will include input from users (adults, students, and teachers). Making sure the facility is meeting the needs of the communities it serves is vital to the success and continued growth of the facility. In the development of class offerings, surveys and focus groups will be utilized to determine community needs. On an on-going basis surveys will be utilized to receive comments and input from the general public, students, and teachers.

4. Significant constraints of the project;

The operational hours for the facility to be open to the general public will be limited in Phase 1 due to the school's schedule. However, this limited access to information technology will be more than what these citizens currently have. Upon completion of the three year project, this constraint will be eliminated.

5. Significant assumptions relating to the project.

A need for information technology access to rural communities has arisen, and this collaborative project proposes to address it. Their pursuit of grant funds is a proactive approach to building access and opportunities to rural Nebraska communities.

Section V: Project Justification

1. Cost/benefit analysis and a life cycle cost analysis;

Even though the computers to be purchased through this grant have a limited life cycle, the impact of NITC funding Phase 1 of the Greeley Learning and Technology Center is unlimited. This project proposes to provide the technology resources and education needed to positively impact youth and adults in the communities of Greeley County. The benefits are priceless. How does one measure improving cooperation among rural communities? This effort alone will unite rural Greeley County communities and enhance the "good life" of Nebraska. This project will also create opportunities for economic development through continuing education and access to information technology.

Even though these benefits are somewhat abstract. The reality is in the past 10 years Greeley County has experienced an 18.8 percent decrease in population. If this trend continues, these rural Nebraska communities will cease to exist. Declining populations will fuel a decreased desire for youth to pursue career options in these communities. This project will allow the youth and adults of rural Greeley County to have access to information and telecommunications technology to upgrade their skills and encourage business development initiatives.

2. Impact the project will have on the customers, clients, and citizens. What services or processes will be changed or implemented, with respect to customer service, productivity, quality, or performance;

This pro-active effort will serve as the centralized resource and technology hub for the county. Many rural schools and libraries have already been forced to consolidate or close. *The City Library is currently only open four hours a week.* Through this grant and by better utilizing city and school resources, and partnering with state and regional entities, it will allow for expanded hours, broader education offerings, and on-line resources available for area students and residents.

In addition to the educational impact, the area would receive economic and workforce development benefits. Unfortunately, many young adults migrate out of rural Nebraska into larger cities or even other states to find employment. This growing trend has greatly impacted Greeley County. Since the 1990 Census, *the population of Greeley County has decreased by 18.8 percent.* By offering information technology classes (i.e. Internet and E-commerce), these young adults will receive awareness and education about the tools necessary to create and operate successful businesses without having to leave the "good life" of rural Nebraska. Information technology allows tele-commuting and entrepreneurial activities to take place globally, even from small town Nebraska. Through the Greeley Learning & Technology Center, doors can be opened and minds expanded as to the possibilities available via technology for all generations.

3. **Impact the new system will have on current problems and how it will impact the entity's policies, procedures, standards, staffing, costs, and funding;**

The proposed project will be incorporated into the Greeley Public School System and will adhere to their policies, procedures, and standards. The school board is committed to securing and providing resources for this center to become a reality for area communities. Gene Haddix, Superintendent for Greeley and Scotia School systems, in cooperation with the Greeley Technology Task Force will collaborate to merge the resources of the city and school and strive to provide adequate access and sharing of resources for all citizens of Greeley County. Equipment purchases and staffing will be coordinated through, and ultimately the responsibility of the Greeley Public School System.

4. **Other solutions that were evaluated and why they were rejected. Include their strengths and weaknesses. Explain the implications of doing nothing and why this option is not acceptable;**

One solution that has been discussed included purchasing an empty store building in downtown Greeley for the Learning and Technology Center. The main disadvantage of this solution was the lack of resources including existing computers, equipment, distance learning technology, and personnel. This approach would have required the Technology Task force to start from scratch rather than utilizing the personnel and equipment resources the school is offering.

There is a need to provide access to information technology and continuing education to students, adults and teachers of Greeley County. If nothing is done to address this issue, these communities may cease to exist because youth will move to other cities and states. This effort will provide a foundation for business, economic and personal development opportunities to all generations.

A key component of any organization or business today is their ability to adapt to change. This pro-active effort is positioning these communities to adapt to and become better prepared for the future of technology and business.

5. **The project's compliance with any state or federal mandates.**

Not applicable.

Section VI: Implementation

1. **Project Sponsor (s) and stakeholder acceptance analysis;**

This project is a collaboration between Greeley Public Schools, Greeley Area Technology Task Force, Greeley/Nebraska Community Foundation, Village of Greeley/Library, Central Community College, Progressive Swine Technologies, Maxum Productions, Educational Service Unit #10, Laurel-Concord Community Learning Center and several community/business volunteers. Representatives from these entities and the surrounding communities have been meeting for over two years to develop a Greeley Learning and

Technology Center to provide rural citizens with access to information technology and continuing education. These partners have committed time and resources to the development and implementation of this project to serve communities in Greeley County.

2. Define the roles, responsibilities, and required experience of the project team;

Role	Individuals	Responsibilities	Experience
Project Directors (10%)	Gene Haddix, Superintendent Greeley/Scotia Public Schools Amy Dickey, Greeley Public Schools Teacher	• Oversee project implementation • Authorize equipment purchases, hiring, payroll • Supervise media technician • Assist with coordination/development of Learning and Technology Center • Responsible for preparation of project reports in collaboration • Coordinate with other educational facilities use of telecommunications system • Coordinate class offerings, training, and continuing education • Conduct focus groups/surveys to access needs of general public, students, and teachers	• Experience in budget management, project implementation, and supervising • High level of communication skills (one-on-one and public speaking) • Experience in promoting • Experience in coordinating community education classes
Part time Media Technician (s) (50%)	To Be Announced	• Research, recommend equipment and resources purchases • Track use of facility and resources • Reports to Project Director • Receives input from Project Director, advisory board, and community members • Promote Learning & Technology Center to surrounding communities	• High degree of information technology experience • Experience in coordination of community projects • High level of communication skills (one-on-one and public speaking) • Experience in promoting
Advisory Board & Technology Task Force (Community and business volunteers from Greeley, Spalding, Genoa, and Columbus)	Jim Dutcher Amy Dickey Karen Glesinger Noreen Burger Tom Speltz Vicki Harvey Karin Rieger Patty Butcher Jackie Nekoliczak Traci Nekoliczak Connie Trede Bob Dutcher Paul Smith	• Assist in planning/implementation of project • Provide input as to class offerings and utilization of facility • Continue fund raising efforts and grant development to implement all three phases	• Commitment to development of opportunities in Greeley County • Education, business, and governmental experience

3. List the major milestones and deliverables for each milestone;

Project Timeline	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6	M7	M8	M9	M10	M11	M12
Project Team Planning Meeting & bi-monthly meetings	●		●		●		●		●		●	
Hire part time technician (s)	●											
Staff development	●	●	●									
Research on-line resource information/equipment requisitions		●										
Order computer equipment, software, business resources	●											
Install information technology equipment/software				●	●							
Open school facility to general public			●	●								
Establish plan of operation (procedures, hours open, etc)		●										
Learning & Technology Center Open House			●									
Assess community training and educational needs				●	●							
Coordinate training and educational offerings					●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Fund raising and grant writing efforts to complete all phases of project	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Survey assessment of facility						●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Promote class offerings to general public				●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Preparation of six month & final report					●	●					●	●

4. Training and staff development requirements and procedures;

This project will provide the means for additional business training and teacher staff development to be conducted in Greeley County. Individuals will no longer be required to travel to other Nebraska cities. Training will be able to be conducted via distance learning and on-site in the computer lab.

Staff development training will be provided to the media technicians through ESU 10, Greeley Public Schools, and Central Community College.

5. **Maintenance and on-going support requirements, plans and provisions.**

The Greeley Public School system will assume the responsibility of maintenance and on-going support for the information technology purchased through this grant. The project partners will continue to pursue grant funding/fund raising to implement Phase 2 and 3 of the Greeley Learning and Technology Center.

Section VII: Technical Impact

1. **Describe the hardware, software, and communications requirements for this project. Describe the strengths and weaknesses of the proposed solution;**

Currently, Greeley School Systems has 28 desktop multi-media computers in place that will be utilized during non-school hours to provide continuing education to community members. These computers are equipped with Internet Explorer and Microsoft Office Products (Word, Excel, PowerPoint). A Distance Learning system linking Scotia, Spalding, Wolbach, Greeley, and Central Community College is currently in place.

Through NITC grant funds four additional desktop multi-media computers will be purchased to provide an additional computer hub available during school hours to the general public and teachers. Thirty-two copies of Quicken will be purchased to add to current computers and the new ones. This will allow for additional business development/accounting classes to be offered and utilized. A printer and scanner will also be added to the four computer stations. On-line reference libraries and current book/video resources will be purchased.

2. **Rationale for determining the selection and appropriateness of the proposed technology components compared to the needs of the users;**

In order to provide educational offerings that expand the economic development of the Greeley County area, business development classes will be offered. The equipment in place and proposed is Internet accessible and provides the links needed to bring the world to residents of Greeley County.

3. **Issues pertaining to reliability, security and scalability (future needs for growth or adaptation);**

Phase 1 of the Greeley Learning & Technology Center will be overseen through the Greeley School System. The task force will utilize the authority of school administration in dealing with security issues surrounding the hours of operation of the center. Reliability and scalability of equipment will be handled through the school in cooperation with the task force. The computer lease plan will allow for future growth and expansion of the facility.

4. **Appropriateness of the key technologies with respect to generally accepted industry standards.**

All products will be purchased with the expertise of the educational technology standards of Greeley School Systems and ESU 10.

5. Compatibility with existing institutional and/or statewide infrastructure.

All products will be compatible with computers throughout the Greeley School system.

Section VIII: Risk Assessment

1. Describe the risk assessment which has been performed on this project;

Not applicable – a formal risk assessment has not been performed.

2. List the identified risks, and relative importance of each;

One risk that has been identified is the on-going speed of new technology development. The task force and the Greeley School System are aware of this concern and have discussed a computer lease program (see below) to proactively approach this risk.

3. Identify strategies which have been developed to minimize risks;

A proposed strategy to minimize the risk of changing technology is to provide a computer leasing program for citizens of the county to lease the used computers. This plan would allow community members to lease used computer equipment at a reasonable rate, plus allow for a small sustaining income for the project to utilize in the upgrade/new purchases of computer equipment. The project team will work in conjunction with the school to establish a reasonable equipment replacement plan.

4. Impact if project is not completed as proposed.

If this project is not implemented as proposed, citizens and students of Greeley County will be at a considerable disadvantage as they pursue future endeavors. Migration rates of Greeley County will more than likely continue to rise. This project is a grass roots effort to not only provide up-to-date technology and resources to all citizens and students of Greeley County, but to provide opportunities for personal growth, business growth, community collaborations and economic development for rural Nebraska. Concerned and dedicated community members have continued to work for over two years to see the Greeley Learning and Technology Center become a reality. NITC funds would allow the implementation of Phase 1 of this project. This would allow the community to positively forge ahead in the development of a comprehensive Learning and Technology Center.

Section IX: Financial Analysis and Budget

The Greeley Learning and Technology Center is requesting $25,000 from the NITC Community Technology Fund. The entire project cost (all phases) is approximately $400,000 which will be secured through private donations, other grant funding, and in-kind contributions. The Village of Greeley, Greeley Public School system, and the Greeley Technology Task Force are committed to the sustainability of this project after grant funds are depleted.

Greeley Learning & Technology Center Phase 1 Budget

	CTF Grant Funding	Cash Match (5)	In-Kind Match (6)	Other Funding Sources (7)	Total
Personnel (1)	$10,000				
Contractual Services					
Project management, evaluation, and quality assurance			$15,950		$15,950
Other (2) - Staff Training & Development	$3,280				$3,280
Capital expenditures (3)					
Hardware Acquisition	$5,600		$10,500		$16,100
Software Acquisition	$4,120				$4,120
Other Costs					
Supplies and materials	$2,000		$900		$2,900
Other operating (4)			$1,200		$1,200
TOTAL	$25,000		$28,550		$53,550

Itemized Budget

Budget Category	Description	CTF Grant Funding	In-kind Match
Personnel	Part-time media technician(s) – 1000 hours @ $10/hour	$10,000	
Contractual Services			
Project management, evaluation, and quality assurance	Volunteer meetings/planning sessions of task force (550 hours @ $9.00/hour) *Documentation* provided through meeting minutes and attendee records. *Provided by various business & community members*		$4,950
	Gene Haddix, School Superintendent (10%) & Amy Dickey, Teacher (10%) Documentation *provided through time sheets and project reports. Provided by Greeley Public Schools*		$11,000
Other - Staff Training & Development	Workshops, computer, and Internet classes	$3,280	
Capital Expenditures			
Hardware	4 multimedia desktop computers – 4 @ $1,000/each	$4,000	
	Digital camera – 1 @ $1,000	$1,000	
	Printer/scanner for computer work stations – 1 @ $600	$600	
	28 school computers available as resources to the community. Estimated value is $42,000. The computers will be available for 25% of the time, which equates to a value of $10,500. *Documentation* provided by Project Director through computer inventory. *Provided by Greeley Public Schools*		$10,500
Software	32 Quicken programs @ $60/each	$1,920	
	On-line library references	$2,200	
Other costs			
Supplies and materials	Purchase additional reference books, videos, etc.	$2,000	
	Electronic library subscription ($900/year) *Documentation* provided through invoices. *Provided by Greeley Public Schools*		$900
Other operating	Electricity, heat, depreciation of equipment, and supplies - $100 month x 12 months.		$1,200
	Documentation *provided by Project Director through utility bills and invoices. Provided by Greeley Public Schools*		
	Totals	$25,000	$28,550